McLean County's Memorial

To

Hon. John McLean.

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December 6, 1898

Taken from Volume II of
McLean County Historical
Society Transactions

ARRANGED BY
J. H. BURNHAM, Bloomington, Illinois

THE McLEAN MEMORIAL.

December 6, 1898.

PROGRAM.

Prayer, by Richard Edwards.

Introductory, by George Perrin Davis.

Address, on behalf of Board of Supervisors, by LaFayette Funk.

Public Services of John McLean, a memorial on behalf of the Historical Society, by John H. Burnham.

Address: "Reminiscences of John McLean," by Gen. John A. McClernand.

OFFICERS.

President of the Day, George Perrin Davis, president of the Historical Society.

Vice-presidents: H. D. Ledgerwood, chairman Board of Supervisors; Sylvester Peasley, Peter Whitmer, Charles C. Rowell, William J. Baldridge, Duncan M. Funk, Arthur J. Scrogin, James Smith, William T. Bradbury, James Thompson, ex-chairmen of Board of Supervisors.

Committee of Arrangements: Marion McCormick, William C. Jones, John G. Welch, on behalf of Board of Supervisors; George P. Davis, John H. Burnham, Ezra M. Prince, on behalf of the Historical Society.

From the Bloomington Bulletin, December 6, 1898:

McLean county paid a tribute to her namesake today. The Historical Society, voicing the sentiment of the whole people, recalled the days of Senator John McLean, one of the brightest minds of the early territorial days of the great state of Illinois. McLean has been dead nearly 70 years, but his memory lives on and will be forever perpetuated by the great county of central Illinois which bears his name. The idea of a memorial to the memory of this great Illinoisan was a happy one, and from its inception widespread interest has been taken in carrying the event to a successful consummation. Captain J. H. Burnham, Hon. E. M. Prince, and others have been untiring in their efforts to secure data of the illustrious politician and statesman but have been baffled by a remarkable lack of information in the newspapers and records of those days. For instance, the Vandalia paper, published at the time of McLean's death, does not refer to it. The *Congressional Record* has but little relative to his life, and there is a singular lack of matter relative to the life of the county's namesake. The tablet erected by the Society in the

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court house to the memory of McLean has been described in previous issues. Captain Burnham has been most active in the search for data. He has visited Shawneetown, the home of McLean, and interviewed old citizens. He has pored over the newspaper files, county records, and every other avenue that might furnish the coveted information. His efforts are embodied in the able paper which he delivered at the meeting this afternoon and which we present in full. It was hoped to have General John A. McClernand present at the meeting but the infirmities of age prevented him leaving his home in Springfield. He had been asked to furnish some reminiscences of McLean and his remarks would have been most interesting. The Society succeeded in securing the consent of Hon. J. S. Ewing to read the notes of General McClernand and also to add observations of his own.

The meeting this afternoon was held in the circuit court room, which was turned over to the Society by Judge Myers. The capacity of the room was tested and many citizens from out of the county outside of the city were interested auditors. Mr. George P. Davis, president of the Historical Society, presided over the meeting and opened the proceedings by introducing Dr. Richard Edwards who delivered an eloquent invocation. Mr. Davis then delivered the introductory address, speaking as follows:

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

This day marks the turning of a new leaf in the history of this county.

In the first settlement of a new country the struggle for existence is so great with the people that they have no time or thought for reverence of the beauties of nature or the remains of a former race.

So much of such remains as can be utilized in the construction of their dwellings are so used, and the earthworks are leveled by the plow. The grand old trees are cut down for buildings or firewood. The nearest being taken first.

Perhaps some elm that is worthless for either purpose and is not in the way of civilization is forgotten and left.

The articles of war and chase and household use of the former inhabitants that may be acquired are given to the children for toys. The history of their great men and of their own lives which would be so valuable to us are either not written at all or so scantily recorded as to be a great trial to the accurate historian of this day.

After the country is settled and fully improved the people have more time to devote to things other than a struggle for a

livelihood. Then their minds revert to the duty and pleasure of honoring the memory of their ancestors, and of preserving the remains of such monuments or natural curiosities as may still remain among them.

Then memorials are erected to their early great men. The lines of the old earthworks are traced in the cornfields and by statute they are preserved from further spoliation, and the forgotten elm becomes the pride of the community and when in the fullness of time it falls to the ground, everyone feels the loss of a personal friend and the remains are reverently divided among them for keepsakes.

As was said, this day marks the turning of a new leaf in the history of this county.

This great and wealthy county, almost an empire of itself, now turns its thoughts backward to its origin and feels it but just and right that it should remember its early beginnings.

I am the more proud of the fact because this county is one of the first, if not the first, in this state to assist the Historical Society in their labors.

Of the forthcoming volume of the McLean County Historical Society, which is mainly a war volume, together with a roster of county officers and a synopsis of the proceedings of the board of supervisors during the rebellion, the board has ordered one volume put in each school district. And we have no doubt but that other appropriate volumes will be so placed. In many of the eastern states, especially Massachusetts, the towns, which in that section of the country are the political units, have been authorized and directed to copy, edit, and publish their old town meeting records, many of them going back for more than 270 years. The expense to some of the towns has been as much as $40,000 to $50,000.

This great expense is voluntarily and cheerfully borne and the pride of the towns is to publish the most accurate and fully edited volumes.

Mr. Davis then introduced Hon. LaFayette Funk, who was chosen to represent the board of supervisors. Mr. Davis said:

Of the early settlers, one whose business extended over the greater territory and who was the most successful in accumulating land, and who has left a permanent impression on this community,

was Isaac Funk, an early member of the board of supervisors and for whom the township of Funk's Grove was named.

The board of supervisors thought it but fitting to select one of his most distinguished sons, a state senator, and a member of the state board of agriculture for some years, and now a member of their board, to make the address for them, the Hon. LaFayette Funk, of Funk's Grove, who will now address you on behalf of the board of supervisors.

ADDRESS OF HON. LA FAYETTE FUNK.

Mr. President, Pioneers, and Friends: We have met here today, prompted by motives which seldom occur to the people of a county nearly three-quarters of a century after its admission as such by dedicating in public its name to posterity.

During the proceedings of the board of supervisors at its last September meeting some action was taken relative to a communication received from the McLean County Historical Society, making a request that a joint meeting be held with the board at some future time. A special committee was appointed by the chairman of the board to meet with some member or members of the Historical Society and ascertain the object of the meeting and their wishes in the matter, and report back the result of the conference to the board.

The committee's report of the findings at the meeting with the members of the Historical society, was favorable to the joint meeting of the two bodies to take place at this time; and coupled with the report were the suggestions from the committee that the chairman of the board appoint some one of its members to prepare an address on behalf of its members to be read during the proceedings of this occasion.

From some cause, perhaps best known only to himself, the honorable chairman saw fit to appoint the writer to perform that most arduous task, and I am frank to say I believe our chairman made a mistake in the selection of his man, as there are other members of this board, who, for a long number of years, have served their constituents at home and their country at large with ability and distinctive honors, and who, from their long term of public service in the county's interest could have prepared and performed this work more appropriately to this occasion.

The Court House of McLean County Destroyed by Fire June 19, 1900. The McLean Memorial Tablet Was Originally Placed in This Building.

To arrive at something of a definite idea of the subject or theme to be treated of on this occasion, history may have to be repeated to some extent. Through the various and many transitory stages of the county's territorial existence to the present boundary lines, many changes have taken place.

This county, with its present and original territory, has perhaps belonged to and gone under more different names than any other one of the counties of the state.

Our local history tells us that before the organization of McLean county, its territory and inhabitants remained in Fayette county until 1827, though as above stated, prior to this date the names of the several other counties are mentioned as covering this county's present territory.

Tazewell county was organized in 1827, with its county seat at Mackinaw, only twenty miles from Blooming Grove and for four years longer its inhabitants gave their allegiance to Tazewell county.

In 1827 the boundaries of Tazewell county were adjusted and its first election was held at Blooming Grove, at the house of one of the leading inhabitants, William Orendorff, and of the five or six county officers then elected, Blooming Grove secured three. What is now McLean remained as before, divided between Tazewell and Vermilion.

This not only shows that settlers were quite plentiful around the Grove, but that their descendents have come honestly by their willingness to fill all the offices that came handy. Our local history, too familiar to need repetition, shows that soon after Tazewell county had taken a good start, it was thought best to divide the immense territory and after scheming and planning for the organization of new counties, the outcome of the agreement of those it interested, to organize a county out of the following described magnificent district: The south boundary line to be that of the township running east and west four miles south of the present line dividing the counties of DeWitt and McLean, thence north forty-eight miles and a reference to the map will show well toward the north line of the present county of Woodford. The west line to be that of the range line six miles west of the third principal meridian, and that of the east line thirty-six miles, being that of the sixth range line east of the third principal meridian. This terri-

tory lay wholly within the counties of Tazewell and Vermilion, the latter not within the county proper, but lands attached for county purposes.

The original boundaries, as will be seen by the above description, comprised eight townships north and south, and seven ranges east and west, being in extent forty-two by forty-eight miles, in regular form, a perfect rectangle, containing fifty-six townships, each six miles square, or a little over 1,290,000 acres of land in round numbers. This immense extent of territory included the present site of Atlanta, in Logan county, Waynesville and Farmer City, in DeWitt county, considerably over half of the present county of Woodford, almost one-half of the county of Livingston, including the present site of Pontiac, and almost a township of the present county of Piatt. It will be seen by careful examination that the present territory of McLean county, reduced by the later organization of Piatt, DeWitt, Logan, Woodford, and Livingston counties, is approximately four-sevenths of its original territory.

With all due respect to our neighbors and citizens of those counties, which have in their make-up received such a large proportion of McLean county's original tract of land set off or ceded to them, and in the absence of any attempt at the disparagement of their possessions, we still say the average values per acre of the land left within this county's boundary lines were enhanced rather than diminished.

This broad assertion may sound a little egotistical, especially to the residents of our neighboring counties, to impute to them the misfortune that in the divide McLean county, to use a homely phrase, received the cream and they the skimmed milk; but to those of the audience who are well acquainted with the facts it will not be taken with any great amount of surprise.

May we not, at this time—it, if I am not mistaken, being the first attempt to commemorate the county's natal day—look back with profound admiration to the wisdom, forethought, and good work of our honorable committee, Thomas Orendorff and James Latta, who were sent to the state capital, then at Vandalia, in the year 1830, with the requisite number of names petitioning the legislature, then in regular session, that a new county be laid out, and in giving the boundary lines, they did far better than they knew, as the passing of time and subsequent events have shown.

May we not wonder, therefore, that when Blooming Grove's delegation arrived in Vandalia in December, 1830, bearing the petition of our first families for the organization of a new county, embracing such a magnificent collection of well timbered groves, and so many square miles of the richest prairie in the world, it was seen at once that the district in question had immense possibilities and that a large county would some day be found within its new boundary?

At this juncture of the proceedings in the legislature an episode occurred involving the committee and the speaker of the house of representatives, the temper of which may be considered of no small degree of interest incident to the exercises we are holding here today.

The Hon. William L. D. Ewing, the speaker of the house of representatives, a relative and an intimate friend of the late Senator McLean, interested himself actively in influencing our Blooming Grove committee to accord and permit the legislature the privilege of naming the new district in honor of the man whose memory we are commemorating today. Mr. Ewing stated that it was the desire of Mr. McLean's closest and most intimate friends that his name should be given to a large and important county, and at this point in the proceedings, my friends, this great county, which its people feel so justly proud of, was christened with the name it now bears, and we trust will continue to hold till the end of time.

Mr. Ewing was perhaps the best informed as to the value of this region of any man in the legislature, as he had been one of the commissioners appointed in the legislature in 1827 for the organization of Tazewell county, at which time he must have been quite familiar with all the local conditions of this district, besides he had helped to organize other counties in Central Illinois.

If time permitted, we might refer to the services of many of the pioneers of that and later generations who served in thwarting the various attempts to appropriate our territory to the building up of rival counties, but with this passing reference and with our blessing to their memory, we must hasten forward.

The land comprising McLean county, taken as a whole, perhaps cannot for an equal number of acres in one continuous body, be equaled in any country for its fertility of soil, yielding with

comparatively small, or not excessive expense at least, to the husbandman's mode and manner of producing all the cereals, subject to the climatic conditions of this latitude, giving him an abundant remuneration for his time and labor. No better country can be found, all things considered, than right here in Central Illinois for the rearing and maturing to the highest points of finish, all the meat producing animals known to and consumed by man on this continent.

Water, to the rearing and management of live stock of whatever kind or nature, is one of the essential elements, and of this we have an abundant supply, in the way of permanent springs, and streams of pure, clear, running water. The last few years have developed another source of this much needed and indispensable article, by the drilling of tubular wells. This can be done by machinery specially manufactured for the purpose, and underground streams can be reached at no very great amount of expense, that in most instances have proven inexhaustible, of the very best quality of water for domestic and general purposes.

Most excellent groves of fine timber land have by an all-wise Creator been distributed throughout the central and western portions of the county; something unusual too for a prairie country. Some of these groves, too, were made up of the very best of the hard-wood varieties valuable for merchandise and mechanical purposes, and were things of beauty and comfort in their primitive days, but not so with many of them now, for the woodman's ax has made havoc and despoiled them of their beauty until they may almost be considered a barren waste, something we, as ardent admirers and true lovers of good timber, dislike very much to see.

The early pioneers would vie with each other the right to secure for themselves all the timber land they could gobble up, as it was not then known that this entire country was underlaid with vast fields of coal.

In all civilized nations of the world, government and laws of some kind have been established. In our own United States we are governed by the people and for the people by electing to office all our law-making and governing powers from the very highest to the lowest by a vote of the people.

No particular reference to any of them is necessary at this time, though we have arrived at the point in these exercises where

my honorable colleagues may be considered a part and parcel of these ceremonies.

McLean county was organized for the transaction of business May 16, 1831, by the election or appointment of three county commissioners, viz: Timothy B. Hoblit, Jonathan Cheney, and Jesse Havens, all of whom have long since passed from the stage of an active pioneer life to the other shore.

This manner of conducting the county affairs and county business was kept up from year to year by the appointment or election of the commissioners, until November, 1849, when they were superseded by the county court, consisting of the county judge and two associate justices. At the November election of 1857, the question of the system of township organization was voted on. This was a general election, and it was decided the people of the county were willing to adopt the new plan.

In the spring of 1858 the voters of the several newly-organized townships, only twenty-two in number then, now thirty, met and elected a supervisor to represent them at the county seat for the transaction of county business, which system has continued to exist ever since.

Bloomington, by her number of inhabitants, was entitled to one assistant supervisor. It is quite different now.

On the 16th day of May, 1858, the newly elected board of supervisors met in Bloomington and proceeded to organize for the transaction of business, by the election of the Hon. John E. McClun as chairman, and the board proceeded to business.

It may not seem out of place nor inappropriate to make honorable mention of the gentlemen who composed that memorable body, and with your permission I will give their names and the township represented by each of the members.

Mount Hope, Daniel Windsor; Danvers, James Wilson; Dale, Richard Rowell; White Oak, Benjamin F. Rowell; Bloomington, David Simmons and John E. McClun; Normal, William G. Thompson; Savanna, Sylvester Peasley; Towanda, N. S. Sunderland; Gridley, Taylor Loving; Blue Mound, James A. Doyle; Chenoa, J. B. Graham; Pleasant, Ezekiel Arrowsmith; Mosquito Grove, Presley T. Brooks; Funk's Grove, William S. Allin; Dry Grove, Elias Yoder; Randolph, Alfred M. Stringfield; Hudson, James H. Cox; Old Town, Scammon Rodman; Money Creek, William F. Johnson; Lee, Josiah Horr; Lexington, J. C. Mahan; Kickapoo, Henry West.

It will be seen by the above list that only twenty-two townships were represented on the board, as before stated. We know of only four members now living who answered the first roll-call: Presley T. Brooks, Mosquito Grove, now Allin; Sylvester Peasley, Savanna, now Downs; James H. Cox, Hudson, and N. S. Sunderland, Towanda, now living in Kansas.

Bloomington and Normal, by their increased population, are entitled to several assistants, and at the present ratio of increase their membership may become a dangerous element when matters present themselves where the city and country members may not consider the question at issue from the same standpoint.

Few of our citizens realize the magnitude of McLean county's agricultural productions, or its relative rank among other agricultural districts of this country. The census reports of 1870, 1880, and 1890 show that in each of these years, with an annual corn crop amounting to about 11,000,000 bushels, its yield was equal to the combined harvest of six of the Rocky Mountain states, in addition to the product of the six New England states, while it surpassed in this great staple any other single county among the leading counties of all the states of the union. In 1890 its total grain crop as shown by the same authority, was 14,000,000 bushels, and the total value of its agricultural products exceeded $5,000,000. This enormous agricultural total was not exceeded by a single county in the union, with the exception of two or three counties engaged in dairying and market gardening near the largest eastern cities.

McLean county was organized just at the commencement of a new era in the world's history.

In Illinois, the long contest between freedom and slavery had been settled by the exciting contest of 1824, though slaves were actually held in bondage in this state for several years later.

The progress of any people depends largely upon the rapidity of communication. It took the pioneers of McLean county as long to market fifty bushels of wheat in Chicago as it does now P. D. Armour to send a million bushels to Liverpool.

In 1831, this wonderful transformation was just commencing. The first English railroad, only thirty-one miles long, was finished in 1830. At that time there was but ninety-five miles of railroad in the whole United States. The first locomotive constructed in this country for actual service made its first trip January 15, 1831.

Henry and Morse were already experimenting with the electric telegraph. Now by the press we are brought into daily communication with the whole world, and the life of the whole people is immensely enriched and quickened. In 1831, Garrison commenced the publication of the *Liberator* in Boston. Only six years later the first newspaper was published in this county.

But in no department of human activity has there been greater changes than in that of agriculture. The first settlers in this country did not dream this prairie country would ever be settled and become the granary of the world. They supposed they would ever remain great grazing lands, supporting immense herds of cattle.

But about this time they were beginning to see something of the true value and use of the prairie lands, and some large farms, for that period, were beginning to be improved out on the prairie, getting away from the influence of the timber.

Then farming was a comparatively very simple affair, now it has become a complex affair, which will tax the mind of the most vigorous. Already, in 1831, the change had commenced. The first successful mowing machine in this country was patented in 1831. Patents for reaping grain came two years later, and now farm machinery has become so numerous and so complicated that a man must be a capitalist to buy all that is needed on an ordinary farm and be a skilled machinist to care for and operate it.

Coming into being just at the beginning of this great awakening, McLean county has ever been wide awake and foremost, not only in these material things, but all those higher, that go to make up a great people. Its press has been alive, enterprising, and clean; its schools have always borne an enviable reputation. Our common schools have received the constant attention and faithful care of our best citizens, serving without fee or reward, and so honestly have the people been served that I do not know of a single instance where any of the people's money has been lost by defalcation in this county.

The Wesleyan furnishes an admirable college education and the Normal stands in the front rank of schools of that character. Our politicians have been distinguished for ability and integrity and perhaps I might say, for numbers.

Of our professional men, lawyers, doctors, and clergy, perhaps there is no necessity for me to speak, as they are quite able

and perhaps not too modest to magnify their own office, but truth compels me to say that nowhere are there more able, faithful, and devoted men than are to be found among the professional men of this county.

Our charitable institutions are of the very highest character. Our county farm and two hospitals are modern, and our jail receives the praise of every one who visits it. Our churches have kept pace with the other civilizing instruments of the country and within the past ten or fifteen years the value of the church property in this county has probably doubled. When this county was organized the population was about, or perhaps less than 2,000. In 1840 it was 6,565; in 1850 it was 10,163; in 1860, 28,772; in 1870, 53,988; in 1880, 60,100; in 1890, 69,967.

In wealth our progress has been equally marvelous, notwithstanding the war of the rebellion cost this county and its citizens $1,000,000 in bounties paid to fill its quotas and for relief to the soldiers' families, and the enormous amounts bet and lost by our people on the board of trade, mining in the west and other foolish speculations, the county has progressed rapidly and steadily in the accumulation of wealth and the next census will show it to be the richest agricultural county in the state, or, we may say, in the world.

The McLean County Historical Society in the preface to the book they are about to publish, will say, "We doubt if there is any other community of equal numbers where wealth is so equally diffused, where there are so many well-to-do people, so few overly rich, or where there is so little poverty, or so little vice, and so high a grade of intelligence and civic and private virtue, all of which is due quite as much to the early settlers of the county, as to its unrivaled location and physical characteristics."

McLean county's patriotism during the civil war is well shown by the fact that its citizens cheerfully volunteered for the war in great numbers, over 4,000 in all, and its surplus above quotas was the largest of any county in the state, while the brave soldiers in the field were most liberally sustained by the people.

During the late war with Spain, our citizens fully maintained their former patriotic prominence, as was shown by our turning out the largest number of volunteers of any county in the state of Illinois, in proportion to its population. Of course our young men

The McLean Memorial Tablet, Placed in the Court House of McLean County December 6, 1898.

deserve the most credit for this patriotic record, but here again our agricultural prominence went hand in hand with our patriotism, because it was owing to our leading position in the horse raising industry that we were able to take the lead in furnishing cavalrymen for the army. The figures are not at hand to prove it, but it is asserted by some that McLean county furnished to the Spanish-American war in proportion to its population, a larger proportion of volunteers than any other county in the union.

The board of supervisors of this county has been organized forty years, and without boasting, I think I may say that from the first its members have been the representatives of such a people. That in the performance of their duties they have ever been honest, intelligent, and faithful.

The board recognizes the justly appropriate work being done by the Historical Society in preserving the local history of this people and it gives them great pleasure to unite with the Society in dedicating this beautiful tablet to the memory of the noble man for whom this county was named, and in behalf of the board of supervisors I tender its thanks to the McLean County Historical Society for inaugurating the movement that has led to the erection of this tablet, and I also extend our sincere thanks to General McClernand, distinguished alike in military and civil affairs, and whose active life spans the whole history of the state of Illinois, for his share in the exercises of this occasion.

The McLean memorial* tablet was placed upon the south side of the east entrance to the rotunda, on the first floor of the old court house.

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*The memorial tablet referred to was placed on the south wall of the east entrance to the first story of the court house. It was of bronze, 3 feet in height and 4 feet in width. It cost $160 and of this the county paid $125, and the McLean County Historical Society $35. It is considered highly artistic, and the placing of this tablet has given great satisfaction to the public. The tablet was not injured in the great fire of June 19, 1900, and will be given a conspicuous place in the new court house now being erected. It has already become one of the county's most cherished historic memorials, and its value will greatly increase as the years go by.

The Society's Memorial.

The memorial of the McLean County Historical Society to Hon. John McLean, written by Capt. J. H. Burnham,* chairman of the executive committee of the Society was delivered by him as follows:

The Hon. E. B. Washburn, in a sketch prepared for the Chicago Historical Society, says:

"Perhaps less is known at the present day of John McLean than any other public man of his day, who occupied such a distinguished position. His name and memory seems to have almost died out in the state, and it is now practically impossible to gather much of his personal history."

This is an effort to bring together in a reliable shape all of the most important facts of his public and personal history with a view to their preservation for the use of those of our future generations who may be most likely to be interested in their possession.

John McLean was born in North Carolina, February 4, 1791. His father emigrated to Logan county, Kentucky, when his son was four year old, and was able to give him but a limited education. He was a blood relation to the well known Ewing family which originated in Pennsylvania. The famous Thomas Ewing, of Ohio, descended from this stock. A branch of the family emigrated to North Carolina from Pennsylvania, and from these descended the Ewings of Kentucky and of this section. John McLean was related to the Hon. Wm. Lee D. Ewing, one of the early distinguished men of this state, and this gentleman was a second cousin to the father of the Hon. James S. Ewing, of this city, and thus we trace a local relationship to the man whose memory we are honoring today.

It would be interesting could we possess a full genealogy of the McLean family and it is quite probable that future researches will reveal all of the desired information.

McLean county does not carry off all the honors of the family name of McLean, as is shown by the following extract from the history of Hamilton county, Illinois, whose county seat is named

*Authorities consulted: Gov. Reynold's "My Own Times," Moses' History of Illinois, Stuves' History of Illinois, Ford's History of Illinois, Congressional Record, Chicago Historical Society, Vol. III.; Illinois Gazette of Shawneetown.

McLeansboro. "The first house in McLeansboro was a log one built by Dr. William B. McLean, a brother of John McLean of Shawneetown."

The McLean family has been more honored in Illinois than has generally been known in this region, as its local historians have never before been informed of the fraternal relationship existing between McLean county and McLeansboro.

When John McLean was twenty-four years old, having studied law, he emigrated to Shawneetown, Illinois, settling there in 1815, and there he was admitted to the bar in 1816.

Shawneetown was then the commercial and political rival of Kaskaskia, and the two towns were the most important in the territory of Illinois. He at once took a high position at the bar, so high that in 1816, soon after his admission to the bar of the territory, he was appointed to one of the judgeships of its highest court, but he declined the appointment. This declination is quite good evidence that the ambitious young man at that time had very high aims as we find that only two years thereafter, on the admission of Illinois into the union in 1818, he was a candidate for the honorable position of representative to congress.

History informs us that the canvass was one of the most exciting ever known in this state. The great Missouri question was then looming up and a far more important local question was beginning to absorb public attention, which was the question of slavery or freedom for the state of Illinois, and which came to a head six years later in the famous convention campaign of 1824.

McLean's opponent was the famous Daniel P. Cook. The latter was not in favor of slavery in Illinois, but Mr. McLean, being a native of a slave state, was conscientiously and honestly a pro-slavery man. Both of these gentlemen were remarkably eloquent, and both were among the intellectual giants of these days.

Hon. E. B. Washburn says:

"Of all the early settlers of Illinois the names of three men will always stand out pre-eminent, John McLean, Benjamin Mills, and Daniel P. Cook, all dying young, but leaving memories worthy to be cherished by every loyal son of our state."

Illinois had been admitted into the union as a free state, but a very large proportion of its inhabitants were of the opinion that, taking everything into account, it would be to the interest

of this state to cast its fortunes with Kentucky and the southern states. The question, in one form and another, agtiated our pioneers till after the famous campaign of 1824, and it was the principal question before the public in the canvass between Cook and McLean in 1818. Moses' history of Illinois has this to say of the contest:

"McLean was on the side of slavery and Cook on that of freedom. Both being singularly well equipped by study, experience, and inclination for public debate and each of them feeling confident in the justice of his respective side, joint discussions were held by them in all of the principal counties. Hon. Orlando B. Ficklin, who heard these—as also, many years afterwards—the debates between Lincoln and Douglas, involving the same questions, 'awarded the palm' for oratory and interest to the former. McLean, though of lighter complexion, was said to resemble the great Charles Fox in person, and in his style of oratory."

The shorthand reporter and the big blanket sheet newspaper were not on hand during their great debate, and we shall never be able to do more than vainly attempt to imagine how these able men handled the great question, but it is entirely safe to assume that its treatment was not hollow and superficial.

Mr. McLean triumphed at the election by fourteen votes. His term in congress lasted only from December, 1818, to March 3, 1819, but during this time he cast several votes on the side of slavery in the preliminary questions which were being acted upon in congress, and we might also state that he was defeated for congress at the next two elections by D. P. Cook, who voted in congress against the Missouri Compromise of 1820, and who in 1824 cast the vote of Illinois for John Quincy Adams for president, by which act Cook's popularity suffered so severely that he was unable to secure another re-election.

On Mr. McLean's return from congress, in 1819, he returned to the bar of Shawneetown, but was elected to the legislature in 1820, where he served as speaker of the second general assembly and from all accounts, must have been about the ablest politician in the young state.

That he was more than a mere politician, and was also a statesman, we have the best proof possible in the following extract from Moses' history of Illinois:

"The most exciting subject of discussion was the law to incorporate a state bank. The times were hard. Over trading and speculating in-

CAPT. JOHN H. BURNHAM,

Chairman Executive Committee McLean County Historical Society.

duced by the too abundant issue of paper currency by the banks of adjoining states had brought every one in debt. To provide a way to escape the existing evils, the legislature chartered the state bank. There was strenuous opposition to the bill, led by Speaker McLean. By a singular provision of the rules the speaker was not permitted to participate in the debates, except when the house resolved itself into a committee of the whole; nor, indeed, to vote on any question except when a tie occurred. In order to deprive the eloquent speaker from exposing the objectionable features of the proposed measure, the house, which contained an assured majority in its favor, refused to go into a committee of the whole. McLean indignant at such treatment, resigned his position, and upon the floor of the house, made a powerful argument against the bill, in which he prophetically predicted all of the evils which ultimately resulted from the operations of the bank. But the bill passed nevertheless and when the council of revision returned it, pointing out the objections to its provisions, and showing how it was inexpedient and unconstitutional, it was again enacted by the requisite majority."

The references made to his debate with Daniel P. Cook and this evidence of his standing in the second general assembly, sufficiently prove that Mr. McLean was one of the great men of the early days of Illinois and we must always lament the fact that the newspapers of that day were so small as to be unable to hand down to posterity the glowing words of him whose memory we wish to preserve and perpetuate.

The subsequent history of the failure of this state bank and of the distress it brought upon the people of Illinois is positive proof of the statesmanship of Mr. McLean in his vigorous but fruitless opposition to the bank.

Mr. McLean remained out of the legislature for several years, but we may be sure he was no idler. He took a leading part in the great slavery contest in 1824, being on the pro-slavery side, which was defeated. From all that we can now learn of this historical contest it was the most excited and bitter ever known in Illinois.

Governor Reynolds in "My Own Times" says:

"Men, women, and children entered the arena of party warfare and strife; and the families and neighborhoods were so divided and furious and bitter against one another, that it seemed a regular civil war might be the result. Many personal conflicts were indulged in on the question, and the whole country seemed at times to be ready and willing to resort to physical force to decide the contest."

Notwithstanding the bitterness engendered in the great campaign of 1824, we find Mr. McLean emerged from the strife with

almost the universal good will of both parties, which may be taken as an evidence that the public gave him credit for favoring slavery purely from what might be called honestly mistaken views of its expediency.

This is fully proven by the fact that in the fall of 1824, on the eve of all of this excitement, when the legislature balloted for United States senator to fill the short term caused by the resignation of Senator, formerly Governor Edwards, McLean was chosen on the third ballot. This legislature was fresh from the great slavery and presidential contest of 1824, during which Mr. McLean had been one of the most active and eloquent of the pro-slavery orators, but there appears to have been but little opposition to his election. He went to Washington at once, and served from December 20, 1824, to March 3, 1825. There was a senator to be elected at the same time for the long term of six years, and we are told that Senator McLean was also a candidate for that position, but being absent on duty in the United States senate, his friends were not able to rally enough strength for his election and the position was secured by Elias Kent Kane. Of Mr. McLean's senatorial career we have little report, but it was entirely satisfactory to his constituents.

While he was in Washington on this service, the presidential election of 1824, when there was no choice of the people, came to a head by the election in February, 1825, by the national house of representatives of John Quincy Adams. Illinois had given one electoral vote to Adams and two to Jackson. Daniel P. Cook, in the House, now cast the vote of the state of Illinois for Adams, thereby making it the thirteenth state to vote for Adams, exactly a majority of the states, and thus electing Adams. The excitement must have been tremendous and we obtain a glimpse of the indignation of such an intense Jackson man as was Mr. McLean, by the following brief item which he sent to the Shawneetown paper, the *Illinois Gazette:*

"SENATE CHAMBER, FEBRUARY 9, 1825.

"SIR: The votes for president are as follows: Mr. Adams, the six New England States: New York, Maryland, Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, Alabama, and Kentucky. He is elected. The mail starts. I have time to write no more. Great God deliver us. JOHN McLEAN."

It may be proper to add that the people of Illinois were too friendly to Jackson to entirely forgive Mr. Cook for his vote, and

he was defeated at the next election. His death occurred October 16, 1827, while he was still a young man.

His name was given to Cook county, January 15, 1831, almost a year after McLean county was organized, and we thus find the names of these two great political rivals attached the one to the most wealthy and populous county in the state, and the other to the most fertile and the largest in territory.

On Mr. McLean's return to Illinois in 1825, he was elected to the legislature from Gallatin county for two terms in succession and during both of these terms he was speaker of the house. Here he was one of the most influential and valuable members, as we have the most abundant testimony. Ex-Governor Reynolds, who served at the same time, gives him high credit, most especially for his share in the revision and adoption of the laws of 1827, which all old lawyers know was a remarkable work to be performed by a legislative body in the time of an ordinary session, and this volume of the laws is in part one of the existing evidences of the ability of John McLean.

Governor Reynolds in "My Own Times" gives an amusing incident showing evidence of McLean's influence as follows:

"In the legislature of 1826 and 1827, a county was organized, embracing the mining district, which was called Jo Daviess county. I proposed the name of Daviess in the general assembly, and John McLean, with much Kentucky enthusiasm, added the name of Jo to it, and it succeeded. It could not be severed in that legislature as we tried it often."

The county was named in honor of Colonel Joseph Hamilton Daviess, of Kentucky, who fell at the battle of Tippecanoe, in 1811.

But two men have ever been speaker of the Illinois house of representatives for three terms. They are William Lee D. Ewing and John McLean.

Correspondence published in the transactions of the Chicago Historical Society and other sources of information too lengthy for quotation, prove that Speaker McLean was actively engaged in pushing his canvass for election to the position of United States senator when the next vacancy should occur. He had set his heart on winning this prize and this canvass was watched with deep interest by his political friends and enemies. Public sentiment had by this time become overwhelmingly in favor of General Jackson and Mr. McLean's services in behalf of his party were unquestioned.

We can form a good estimate of the strength of Mr. McLean at this period, the crowning point of his influence on Illinois politics, by the simple announcement that when the legislature met in the fall of 1829, it unanimously elected him United States senator for the term of six years from the 6th day of December, 1829. This unanimous election is an honor never before nor since conferred on any other Illinoisan and of itself proves his high standing in the public estimation. But it seems disease was wasting his strength and after the close of the long session, May 31, 1830, he came home to Shawneetown, where he died October 14, 1830, in the fortieth year of his life.

On the 9th day of December, 1830, his colleague in the United States senate, Hon. Elias Kent Kane, pronounced his eulogy, in the course of which he said:

"In private life he was remarkable for his benevolence, frankness, and independence of character. No one in the circle in which he moved had a larger share of the confidence and affection of his fellow men. He was by profession a lawyer, possessed of a vigorous mind and a rapid, but easy elocution. These qualifications, added to honesty of purpose universally accorded to him, raised him to the front rank of his profession and there sustained him. As a statesman, the people of Illinois would long remember him as the author of the most valued portions of their statute books, and as the able and acute presiding officer over the most numerous branch of their legislature."

Ex-Governor Reynolds, in his book, contended that no man in Illinois before or since his day surpassed him in pure, natural eloquence.

He describes him as "a man of gigantic mind, of noble and manly form and a lofty, dignified bearing. His person was large and formed on that natural excellence which at once attracted the attention and admiration of all beholders. The vigor and compass of his mind was exceedingly great and his eloquence flowed in torrents, deep, strong, and almost irresistible."

No wonder that when the legislature assembled a few weeks after his death, presided over by Hon. William L. D. Ewing, his immediate friend and relative, it was easily influenced by the speaker to bestow this loved name upon the large new county to be organized in this region.

Tradition informs us that our pioneers had decided to name this county for Judge Hendricks, of Indiana, but through Mr.

Ewing's influence and advice, they accepted the name so greatly desired by the many friends of the late Senator McLean.

Much that pertains to this portion of our subject relates more strictly to the history of McLean county, and little more need be added in this connection. It should be stated, however, that the city of Shawneetown, where Senator McLean lived, holds his memory in grateful recollection. His body is buried on the high ground, about two miles from the ill-fated city, where may be found the following inscription on the slab over his vault:

IN MEMORY

OF

JOHN McLEAN.

Born in North Carolina, February 4, 1791. He was raised and educated in Kentucky, whence he emigrated to Illinois in 1815, where he held a conspicuous stand at the bar, and in society, for talents and a generous and amiable nature. A representative and senator in the congress of the United States from Illinois; he died while in the latter office, October 14, 1830, lamented by all.

Death loves a shining mark, a signal blow;
A blow, which, while it executes, alarms,
And startles thousands with a single fall.

—*Young.*

GENERAL McCLERNAND'S LETTER.

Owing to ill health and worse weather, Gen. John A. McClernand* could not be present. The following extract is from his letter, read by Hon. J. S. Ewing:

"Mr. McLean emigrated from Kentucky to the Territory of Illinois and settled in Shawneetown in 1815, where he began the practice of his profession as a lawyer, residing there for fifteen years, and until his untimely death in 1830. He and I were contemporary residents of Shawneetown for fifteen years. I often saw him in my boyhood and afterward formed acquaintance with him.

"His personality interested and impressed me. The image of it still lingers in my memory. Physically he was well developed, tall, strong, and stately. When walking the streets his admiring observers would whisper 'there goes the great lawyer, the great orator.' His confident step and appearance denoted him a man of energy and decision.

"Socially, he was affable and genial; his conversation sparkled with wit and humor. He married an educated and accomplished young lady in Kentucky, a short time before his death.

"Mr. McLean was not an academic scholar. During his early life there were no common schools in Kentucky or Illinois, and perhaps there was not a college in all Illinois. His only resource for instruction was the wandering pedagogue and his own assiduity. Like many others he was for the most part self-educated, not a few of whom rank among the most learned of the ages.

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*Maj.-Gen. John A. McClernand is a very remarkable man. He was born in this state and thinks he is the oldest person now living who was born in Illinois. He has had a very long life of usefulness. His first office of which we have record is that of aid to General Posey, in the Black Hawk War. General Posey was a general under Washington in the Revolutionary War, and also held a general's commission in the Black Hawk War. He was buried at Shawneetown, near the grave of John McLean.

McClernand was three times a member of the state legislature, and was six times elected to congress, four times from the Shawneetown district, and twice from the Springfield district. His last term in congress was at the beginning of the war. He was always a Democrat, and he went with Stephen A. Douglas in favor of a vigorous prosecution of the war, during which he was a general of high rank.

At the siege of Vicksburg he was a major-general in command of the Thirteenth army corps and with his troops came very near entering the city in the famous charge on the 23d of May, 1863. He was one of the twelve major-generals from the state of Illinois.

After the war he was circuit judge of the Sangamon district in 1870. He was one of the United States commissioners to settle the Utah difficulties under President Cleveland. The committee of arrangements were very fortunate in securing a paper from General McClernand, one of the last living men who had a personal acquaintance with Hon. John McLean.

Since the above was written General McClernand has died, his death having taken place September 20, 1900.

J. H. BURNHAM.

"As a lawyer, Mr. McLean was both analytic and logical, combining argument with extraordinary eloquence. He was persuasive with the judge and well nigh resistless with the jury. In his profession he was eminently successful. The compensation it brought would have enriched him but for his exceeding liberality towards his friends and the needy. His mind was practical as well as creative and versatile. The union of these qualities marks the distinction of the great leaders of human progress and amelioration.

"Mr. McLean was an actor on the public stage in Illinois for fifteen years. He led a political movement in Illinois which on the wider stage of the nation resulted in the reorganization of political parties and the election of General Jackson to the presidency. What must have been the energy and influence he contributed in the effectuation of so stupendous a result? Alas; he died with the harness of public duty upon him. He died while comparatively young, realizing the fate which so often overtakes the brave, the active, and inspiring. Peace to his ashes; honor to his memory." JOHN A. McCLERNAND.

HON. JAMES S. EWING'S REMARKS.

I was requested on Saturday evening by these gentlemen to read to you a very short sketch of Mr. McLean, which was sent here by General McClernand. It is exceedingly embarrassing always to appear before an audience naturally disappointed by a person whom they expected to hear. My embarrassment is not any less than your disappointment, but I can only read to you these words and without any attempt whatever to fill the place in your interest of the distinguished gentleman who is absent, I will detain you but a very few minutes.

(Mr. Ewing then read General McClernand's letter, given above in this volume.)

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—I desire to voice the sentiment of this assembly in thanks to the officers of the McLean Historical Society in what I consider the great and important work which they have undertaken and accomplished. I do not know whether at first thought we realize exactly what has been done, with what great labor they have unearthed the facts that have been presented to you today and which have resulted in placing in this court house a tablet upon which is recorded the birth, death, and some historical facts of the distinguished gentleman for whom this county has been named. I doubt whether 99 out of 100 people in this county know the circumstances under which this county was

named or anything of the life of the distinguished citizen for whom it was named. I doubt whether any of them, or very many of them, knew anything about the man himself.

Human fame is not very lasting. Professional and political fame is, of all things, perhaps, the most transitory and ephemeral. Here is a man who came to Illinois when perhaps 25 or 26 years old; nobody ever heard of him before. In fifteen years he became one of the leading lawyers of the state, eminent in his profession. He was elected to congress. He was three times a member of the legislature and the speaker of the popular branch of that body. He was twice elected to the United States senate. He died at the age of 39, a senator in congress. He was a man who had taken active part in all the great questions of the day. And yet but a few years have passed away and his memory has passed away with the years. By such labor as has been performed by these gentlemen, aided by the board of supervisors, the memory of that just and honorable man, of whom I think hereafter we will all be proud, has been rescued from this oblivion. We have at last, after all these years, to a slight degree paid the homage which his memory deserves.

The men who were prominent in the territorial history of our country were, Governor Edwards, the territorial governor; Govenor Shadrach Bond, the first governor of the state; Hon. Wm. Lee D. Ewing, who was secretary of state and prominent in all the public affairs of the time; Elias K. Kane, who was senator in congress; Hon. Daniel P. Cook, and Mr. John McLean. Cook county was named for one, McLean county for another, Edwards county for one and Kane county for another. These men have all passed away, as I have said, and it requires just such scenes as this to bring their memory back to the people. Will you permit me, ladies and gentlemen, in carrying out this thought, a personal reminiscence.

In the early history of this county, in the old court house which stood on exactly the same spot where this court house stands, two boys were attracted to the court house to hear a lawsuit tried. And when they came into that court house, there were eight young men assembled, not all of them engaged in the trial of the case, but some of them, and all of them giving strict attention to the proceedings. The lawsuit was not one of very great importance. It was between a man who had permitted his cattle

to stray in his neighbor's corn field; his neighbor had set his dog on them, and was sued for trespass. The suit was really between the dog and the steer. But engaged or interested in that trial were eight men, young lawyers. I doubt whether any of them were over 26 or 27, certainly not over 30 years of age, most of them much younger than that.

The court was presided over by Hon. Samuel H. Treat, and I can see him in my mind's eye today, as he occupied the bench in nearly the exact position where I am now standing, a man who afterwards became United States judge and one of the most distinguished and honorable lawyers and judges in the state.

Another one was General Gridley, a man whom all of you knew, who afterwards became a distinguished citizen of this state. One was David Davis, who afterwards was a distinguished lawyer, a circuit judge, judge of the United States supreme court, United States senator, and acting vice-president of the United States, a man of state and national fame, a citizen of this county, whom all honored and loved.

Another one was John T. Stuart, a very distinguished lawyer of Springfield; several times a member of congress, and one of the most lovable of men.

Another one was David Campbell, the prosecuting attorney at that time and afterwards a distinguished lawyer.

Another one was Edward D. Baker, who was afterwards United States senator from the state of Oregon, a famous orator who immortalized himself by pronouncing the eulogy over David Broderick, and who was afterwards killed at Ball's Bluff.

Another one was James McDougal, a brilliant Irishman who afterwards became senator from the state of California.

Another one was Abraham Lincoln, the man who has passed into the pantheon of universal history and upon whose head has settled the sunshine of eternal glory. And these were the young men gathered around this little bar and whose names and fame have passed into history. I might add that one of those boys afterwards became vice-president of this great republic and the other one is your speaker.*

*Hon. James Stevenson Ewing is one of our most talented lawyers. He was educated at Center College, Kentucky, studied law in Bloomington, and has always resided here since he became a member of the bar which was in 1859. He belongs to the well known Ewing family and is quite

Speaking to any audience in the United States, or perhaps I might say in the world, I doubt if an incident of such significance could be truthfully related of any other gathering. We have just cause to be proud of this man for whom our county is named, whom none of us knew, but whom all of us honor.

If one should have gone, at that time, into the legislature of our state, we would have found the following men:

Jno. Reynolds, Thos. Ford, Jno. A. McClernand, Sydney Breese, Edward D. Baker, Daniel Butterworth, Usher F. Linder, Orlando B. Ficklin, Cyrus Walker, Orvil H. Browning, Archibald Williams, Robert Blackwell, Stephen A. Douglas, Augustus Koerner, Lyman Trumbull, and Abraham Lincoln. And I undertake to say that no legislature ever assembled in any commonwealth of this union or anywhere, composed of abler men or of men possessed of more intellectual strength than this body of men.

We are all proud, my fellow citizens, of the great commonwealth of Illinois, and these men whom I have mentioned, and this man whose memory we are here to honor especially, were men who laid the foundation of our prosperity. They took part in the great questions arising during the transition period between our territorial and state governments; they discussed and settled the great questions of political economy and of state prosperity, the question of slavery or freedom, and of our financial policy. We cannot honor them too much.

A man's political fame cannot be lasting unless it is connected with some great principle. A lawyer's fame above all others, is the most ephemeral, because if he exerts his learning and skill and cunning in the trial of a lawsuit, the lawsuit passes away and nobody cares anything about it except the parties interested.

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nearly related to the late Hon. Thomas Ewing, one of Ohio's great men. He is a cousin of the Hon. Adlai Ewing Stevenson, and for many years they were law partners in Bloomington, and they have both been well known all over the state for their activity in the politics of the Democratic party of Illinois. They are both said by family tradition to be related to the Hon. Wm. Lee D. Ewing, who was responsible for giving the name of John McLean to this county. The same tradition says that like Mr. Wm. L. D. Ewing, they are also related to the family of John McLean, but until the family genealogies are published, the exact relation cannot be given.

Under the second administration of President Cleveland, Mr. James S. Ewing was made minister to Belgium, with the title of Minister Plenipotentiary and Ambassador Extraordinary: and with his cultivated and accomplished wife, who was a daughter of the Hon. Hamilton Spencer, of this city, spent four pleasant years at elegant Brussels, the capital of Belgium.

A politician may be prominent amidst the strife of today, but his fame is gone unless he links his name and casts his political fortune with the success or defeat of some great political principle. And thus it was with those of whom I have spoken and of the distinguished citizen whose name we memorialize here today.

I thank you, ladies and gentlemen, very cordially for your kind attention.

LETTER FROM J. B. BARGER.

SHAWNEETOWN, MARCH, 8, 1896.

J. H. Burnham, Bloomington, Illinois:

DEAR SIR: Your letter of March 3, is at hand and read. My recollection of John McLean was on his little farm when he kept his horses and hounds and had a man hired to take care of his horses and hounds. He did not as I ever knew hunt with a gun, it was for chasing with hounds. My recollection is, he was a lawyer, but I have no recollection of his practicing law. We did not have any court house in Shawneetown, the courts were held in a warehouse. Since writing you before, it came to my mind that Gen. John A. McClernand, of Springfield, Illinois, was raised here and knew John McLean. He is older than I am and can possibly give you more information than I can. He was spoken of in the best terms by everybody who knew him. He never went out of the county hunting as I ever knew. President John Cook, of the University of Normal always reminded me when I met him, of John McLean, quick action and speech, but McLean was not so fleshy.

I don't know of any other person now living that knew him but General McClernand. Yours respectfully,

J. B. BARGER.*

LETTERS FROM CAPT. JOHN M. EDDY.

SHAWNEETOWN, ILL., JUNE 9, 1896.

J. H. Burnham, Esq., Bloomington, Illinois:

DEAR SIR: I herewith enclose a copy of the record of the public services of John McLean, furnished me by my uncle, Judge J. J. Hayden, of Washington, which I hope will be of service to you, if you have not already the same.

Also the following from the history of Hamilton county: "The first house in McLeansboro was a log one built by Dr. Wm. B. McLean, a brother

*Mr. Barger, who was 85 years old in 1896, spent over a year with his daughter at Normal about 1895. He was acquainted with President Cook, and his reference to Mr. McLean's resemblance to Mr. Cook, has considerable meaning. Mr. Barger was for a long time county clerk of Gallatin county. In my visit to the old gentleman at Shawneetown, I did not learn much more than is given in the letter. J. H. BURNHAM.

of John McLean, of Shawneetown." As the doctor may have descendants in that county who have some family records, it is quite probable that you might obtain something of Judge McLean's parentage, early youth, etc., through some of them. Judge T. B. Stelle, of McLeansboro, could assist you in this, as he is an old citizen and has written a history of Hamilton county, extracts from which appear quite often in my book.

Copy of record of court held here in 1816.

"This court met February 20, 1816, at the house of Charles Hill in Shawneetown. Present, Honorables Leonard White and John Marshall, on this day John McLean was admitted to practice law."

Yours,

JOHN M. EDDY.*

SHAWNEETOWN, ILL., NOVEMBER 19, 1896.

J. H. Burnham, Esq., Bloomington, Illinois:

DEAR SIR: I will give you my impressions of the personality of Judge McLean, which were formed by conversing with many people who knew him well, while I was a youth from 10 to 15 years of age. My father bought our old homestead from Judge McLean, and moved his

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*J. M. Eddy was a son of Henry Eddy, who published a paper at Shawneetown, Illinois, as early as 1817, called the *Illinois Emigrant*, and also published other newspapers at a late day, and was a leading citizen of the young state. Mr. J. M. Eddy examined the files of his father's papers for me in search of information relating to the Hon. John McLean, and was of great assistance to me in several directions, and deserves the thanks of the community for his efforts. In this connection it may be stated that at the time Mr. McLean lived in this state, there was no daily newspaper, no large town or city and no newspaper of sufficient size and circulation to publish in full scarcely a single speech from any one in the land. It was not the day of shorthand reporters, and the speeches of public men were seldom reported in full. It was a rare thing, even in the large cities, to publish speeches, but it was rarer still in Illinois.

Even the reports of congress were mere abstracts until several years after McLean left congress, and it has been impossible to find anywhere a single one of his speeches printed in full. In the publications of the Chicago Historical Society in the "Governor Edwards Papers," may be found some letters written by John McLean, but they are largely of a personal nature, and do not give much idea of his literary style, but there is enough to convince us he must have been quite well educated.

Mr. McLean's ability must be inferred from the general statements given by the authorities I have quoted, which are sufficiently definite to prove that he was a man of brilliant parts, and as stated by Mr. Ewing in his remarks, to have accomplished what he did at the early age of 39 years, he must have been a man of most wonderful power.

The fact that the town of McLeansboro, the county seat of Hamilton county, Illinois, was named for Dr. W. B. McLean, a brother of John McLean, is one of very peculiar interest to us. It may be proper to state that diligent inquiry has so far failed to obtain any further information in regard to persons of this name living in either McLeansboro, or North Carolina.

A cousin, Senator Walker, has written a letter from Arkansas, which is given in this connection. J. H. BURNHAM

family onto it in 1832, when I was but 2 years old, and I spent the early part of my life there among country people, several of whom were tenants on the place and so remained for many years.

From these and others living in the neighborhood, I got the impression that he had the happy faculty of adapting himself to the ways and customs of all sorts of people. For instance: When overworked or depressed in spirits, he would go onto his farm where a Mr. Holly kept for him a pack of hounds and spend a week or more hunting foxes, in which sport the whole neighborhood joined.

He would go to all log rollings, corn huskings, house raisings, and country frolics, and would make a full hand at all or any of them. I have heard these people tell how he would beat all comers at running, jumping, wrestling, and lifting, and he would, to use a modern phrase, "just turn himself loose." In fact the people almost worshipped him. All this I think accounts for his great popularity among the plain people. When at home though, he was an entirely different man. There, he was the personification of dignity and courtesy, rarely unbending, never harsh, or cruel or insulting, a perfect Chesterfield in courtly manner to all.

Yours truly,

JOHN M. EDDY.

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*I have always taken a great interest in whatever pertains to the history of McLean county. Long before the organization of the McLean County Historical Society, and even before I wrote the history of Bloomington and Normal in 1879, I had a strong desire to know more of the history of our pioneers.

When it was proposed to honor the memory of the man for whom this great county was named, I commenced to gather historical material for the occasion, with the single idea of furnishing it to some one of our leading orators to be used on the day of the public exercises, with no thought of delivering it myself, being no speaker and only an ordinary reader, but as the members of the Society would not unite in designating any other person, I reluctantly assented to their wishes.

As stated by the Hon. E. B. Washburn, in my quotation from his paper, and as mentioned in a somewhat similar manner by one of our own speakers, the Hon. James S. Ewing, it has seemed surprising that history gives us so little concerning such an eminent man.

But for that matter, we find history has treated in much the same manner men like Jesse B. Thomas, Daniel P. Cook, and Edward Coles, except that Governor Coles like our other governors, had the good fortune to have the state printer for a publisher on many occasions.

Our investigations have at least resulted in giving to the citizens of this county, of whom it is probable those born here are now in the majority, all that can be learned concerning the early statesman whose name is forever attached to our county, and it seems to me that the feeling of county pride so well developed already, is likely to grow with the growth of McLean county, and to deepen and intensify as the years roll round.

If I have been at all instrumental in adding another cubit to the stature of McLean county's patriotic pride in its ancestry, its history, and itself, I shall have been amply repaid for my trouble.

J. H. BURNHAM.

The following is a portion of a letter from the Hon. Thomas Ridgway, late of Shawneetown, Illinois, formerly state treasurer of Illinois. Mr. Ridgway was one of the first to suggest that the people of McLean county take steps to publicly honor the memory of John McLean. This letter was written to J. Dickey Templeton, of Bloomington, Illinois.

LETTER FROM HON. THOMAS S. RIDGWAY.

SHAWNEETOWN, ILL., JANUARY 3, 1896.

J. D. Templeton, Esq., Care First National Bank, Bloomington, Illinois:

DEAR SIR: In regard to Senator John McLean, his residence and burial place here long years ago. His remains lie buried in our cemetery, "Westwood Cemetery," on the hills two miles west of town, the family burial place of all our citizens. The tomb is of brick masonry of oblong shape, seven feet long by three and a half feet wide, with a single stone slab covering the same, with the inscription on its face, the brick walls two and a half feet high above the surface of the ground. The brick work is now needing some repairs. It has been repaired time and time again during the many years since he was buried there, say sixty-five years ago —1830 to 1895.

He is buried among a number of noted men of southern Illinois, such as General Posey, who was aid to General Washington, and was United States senator of Louisiana, and governor of the Northwest Territory—Illinois, Indiana, etc., etc., also Judge Hardin, John Marshall, Henry Eddy, and many others.

While in Washington during his last term he married a Kentucky lady and brought her home with him. Before his term was out he died here during a vacation. His wife was with him. Shortly after his death she went to Missouri, where she had friends and she never returned, and no one here ever heard from her afterwards. McLean left little or no property. He came to Shawneetown in 1815 and commenced to practice law, and soon became identified with our people, made this place his home, and I do not think they would like to have his remains removed. We consider it quite a distinction for our town to claim the honor of once being the home of so eminent a man as John McLean, prior to and at the time Illinois was born into the union—1818—and continuing to reside with us while a member in congress and United States senator, until his death in 1830.

Your truly,

THOMAS S. RIDGWAY.

LETTER FROM HON. J. D. WALKER.

FAYETTEVILLE, ARK., DECEMBER 10, 1898.

Capt. J. H. Burnham, Bloomington, Illinois:

DEAR SIR: I read with great pleasure a special to the *St. Louis Republic,* of the 7th inst., a notice of the proceedings of the McLean County Historical Society in reference to the memory of John McLean, and extracts from your address on that occasion.

Allow me to express to you my sincere thanks and gratitude, as he was my uncle, the oldest brother of my mother, who was the wife of Col. J. V. Walker, late of Logan county, Kentucky.

There is a mistake in the statement that "He came to Shawneetown from North Carolina in 1815." He came from Logan county, Kentucky, to Shawneetown, according to the family record. The father and mother of John McLean, Ephriam McLean and Elizabeth Byert, the former of North Carolina and the latter of York District, South Carolina, were married in 1788, and emigrated to Kentucky in 1796, when John McLean must have been a small boy, and settled about twelve miles west of Russellville, Logan county, Kentucky, where in 1803 my mother, Susan Howard McLean, was born. The father of John McLean, Rev. Ephriam McLean, according to the history of the C. P. church was its first ordained minister. The McLean record further states, that "the oldest son, John, after returning from Indian wars under General Jackson, studied law under the instruction of Judge McLean in Greenville, Kentucky, and settled in Shawneetown to practice law when Illinois was a territory."

My grandmother fondly cherished the memory of her son and often exhibited presents made by him when in congress.

Should you meet Hon. Adlai E. Stevenson, who I believe still resides in your city, present my regards. I knew him when in congress. Again thanking you, I am truly and respectfully,

J. D. WALKER.*

P. S. It may be of interest to state that the grandfather of John McLean, Charles McLean, came from Scotland to North Carolina in 1750, and was a major in the American army, in the Revolutionary War.

J. D. W.

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*It is with great pleasure that I have been able to add to the published exercises of the dedication, a letter from the Hon. J. D. Walker, of Fayetteville, Arkansas, received by me a few days after our exercises took place. It gives us very important information of which we were in entire ignorance. The fact that his father, the Rev. Ephriam McLean, preached the first Cumberland Presbyterian sermon in Kentucky shows a very honorable parentage. Mr. Walker also tells us John McLean served in the Indian War under General Jackson, a fact hitherto unknown. It is also exceedingly interesting to be told that his father's grandfather, Major Charles McLean was in the War of the Revolution.

John McLean, were he alive today, would be entitled to be called a Son of the Church and a Son of the Revolution.

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THE CLAN McLEAN.

Anything relating to the name McLean, will be interesting in this particular connection.

We first meet with the word in Scotland, where the clan McLean was once one of the most powerful clans. Its headquarters appear to have been on the islands known as the Inner Hebrides, on the west coast of Scotland, especially the islands of Mull and Jura, while the McLeans also occupied a large part of the county of Argyle on the western coast of Scotland, adjacent to the Inner Hebrides.

The powerful clan of McLeans must have been the ancestors of all those of the name now found in the various parts of the world.

In "The Scotch-Irish in History" published in 1899, by Rev. James Shaw, of Bloomington, Illinois, a valued member of the McLean County Historical Society, we are given a list of sixty-nine of the Scotch-Clans of the present times, and of these, thirty-three are Macs. Among them he gives McLane, which is one of the several ways of spelling McLean. He also gives a full list of names of the different Scottish clans of the past and present, beginning with Mac, and we find there are, or have been, 137 Macs. Among these we find McLean.

Mr. Shaw shows plainly that the Scotch and Scotch-Irish, have exerted vast influence for good upon the English-speaking peoples of the world, and particularly upon the United States.

I regret to state that two letters written by me to Ex-Senator Walker, and one by the Hon. A. E. Stevenson, lately, have all failed of drawing out a reply, but we are exceedingly thankful for the very important facts stated by this kinsman. Mr. Stevenson authorizes me to say that during his acquaintance with the senator in Washington when he was United States senator from March 4, 1879, to March 4, 1885, he talked with Mr. Walker several times in relation to John McLean and the family relationship. He adds that from the feeble health of Mr. Walker the last time he heard of him, he is very doubtful if the gentleman is still alive. He also told me he had an impression, almost amounting to a certainty, that Ex-Senator Call, of Florida, was also a cousin of John McLean and of Senator Walker. The genealogical and other facts here given will enable those who are anxious to learn more, to make further inquiries in North Carolina and Kentucky, and perhaps to learn much more of great interest concerning the McLean family. For my own part, being not yet fully satisfied with my researches, I may at some future time be able to learn something more in this line of investigation.

The letter which is published herewith from Hon. J. D. Walker, who was United States senator from the state of Arkansas from March 4, 1879, to March 4, 1885, and who was a cousin of John McLean, states that his grandfather was Charles McLean, who came from Scotland to North Carolina in 1750, and served as major in the American army in the Revolutionary War. This settles the question of his ancestry very satisfactorily and prepares the way for future investigations if any are curious as to going further back into the Scottish ancestry of John McLean. Mr. Walker shows his ancestry to have been of more than ordinary intelligence and high standing, and he gives very valuable information which was not available at the time the memorial was prepared by me.

J. H. BURNHAM.